"Péron's party, being desirous of seeing the effect of music on the Tasmanians, on one occasion sung the Marseillaise. 'At first the savages appeared more troubled than surprised, but after some moments of uncertainty, they lent an attentive ear; the repast was suspended, and the proofs of their satisfaction manifested themselves in such bizarre contortions and gestures, that we could hardly restrain ourselves from laughing. . .. Hardly was a verse finished than great shouts of admiration escaped simultaneously from all mouths; above all, the young man was as if beside himself; he clutched his hair, he scratched his head with both hands, he shook himself in a thousand ways, and repeatedly prolonged his shouts. After this strong and warlike music we sang some of our light and little tender airs; the savages appeared to grasp the true sense, but it was easy to see that sounds of this sort had a very slight effect upon their organs' (pp. 226-227). On another occasion M. Bellefin, one of his companions, 'began to sing, and accompanied himself by lively and animated gestures; the women were immediately silent, observing his gestures with as much attention as they appeared to give to his songs. As soon as a couplet was finished, some applauded by loud shouts, others laughed to splitting, while the young girls, no doubt more timid, remained silent, showing nevertheless, by their actions and the expression of their faces, their surprise and satisfaction. After M. Bellefin had finished his song, one of the women began to [148] imitate his gestures

and the tone of his voice in a very original and funny way, . . . she then herself began to sing, so rapidly that it would have been difficult to reproduce such music within the ordinary principles of our own' (ibid. p. 51)."

1: Roth--148
116, 177, 533

(No date) 1890

Tasmanians

"The other French parties were not so successful in their attempts to get the natives to listen to European music. La Billardière (II. ch. x. p. 45) tells us: 'Our musician had brought on shore his violin; . . . but his self-love was truly mortified at the indifference shown to his performance. Savages, in general, are not very sensible to the tones of stringed instruments.' Later on, a similar attempt had a very comical ending (ibid. p. 55): 'We knew already that these savages had little taste for the violin; but we flattered ourselves that they would not be altogether insensible to its tones, if lively tunes, and very distinct in their measure, were played. At first, they left us in doubt for some time; on which our musician redoubled his exertions; . . . but the bow dropped from his hand, when he beheld the whole assembly stopping their ears with their fingers, that they might hear no more.' According to this traveller the natives attempted 'more than once to charm us by songs, with the modulation of which I was singularly struck, from the great analogy of the tunes to those of Arabs in Asia Minor. Several times, two of them sung the same tune together, but always one a third above the other, forming a concord with the greatest correctness' (ibid. p. 50)."

"Respecting their singing Mr. Geo. Hull says: 'It was, I think, in the year 1824 or 1825, that some ten or twelve natives appeared on the west bank of the Tamar, opposite Launceston. They "coo-ed" and made signs to be taken across, which was instantly complied with. There was not a man or boy among them.... We made signs to them to sing and dance.... They sang, all joining in concert, and with the sweetest harmony; the notes not more than thirds. They began, say, in D and E, but swelling sweetly from note to note, and so gradually that it was a mere continuation of harmony—very melancholy, it is true. It was like what it would be if you began one chord on the organ before you took your fingers from the keys of the other! (Smyth, II. pp. 390-391)."

1: Roth--148-149 (No date) 1890 Tasmanians
116, 533

"In describing a corroboree of the natives which took place at full moon, Lloyd says (ch. iv. p. 50): 'Their minor tones and monotonous voices they accompanied by playing upon greasy kangaroo rugs, which were rolled up in some peculiar manner, so that, when struck by the open hand, the sound resembled that of [149] a muffled drum. Others joined in the rude concert by beating time with two short dried sticks, and that with a precision adapted for an orchestra.' He adds that often 'an inspiring allegretto movement of the thumping band had a very invigorating effect on the dancers. Their songs... were exceedingly soft and plaintive; their voices not wanting in melody. They repeated the same note in soft and liquid syllables; descended to the second bar, and finished with a third above the key note. They sometimes varied, by running suddenly into the octave. Their strains were considered, by a Scotchman, a close resemblance to the Highland bag-pipe. The stanzas they repeated again and again' (West, II.). Leigh found their song may be listened to with pleasure, their voices being sweet, and the melody expressive (III. p. 243)."

1: Roth--149 (No date) 1890 Tasmanians
116, 533

"Backhouse gives an account of their singing, as follows, on an occasion when he once visited the huts. The natives were lying around a central fire: 'On our entering the people sat up, and began to sing their native songs--sometimes the men, at others the women--with much animation of countenance and gesture. This they kept up to a late hour; they are said often to continue their singing till midnight. To me, their songs were not unpleasing; persons skilled in music consider them harmonious' (ch. viii. p. 83). Davies simply says (p. 416) 'their singing is far from unmusical; ' that 'they commence singing in a low monotonous tone, and rise to a higher key as they get excited. According to Jeffreys (pp. 124-125), 'their song is accompanied with considerable gracefulness of action, and is poured forth in strains by no means inharmonious; on the contrary, the voice of the singer, and in many parts the sweetness of the notes, which are delivered in pretty just cadence, and excellent time, afford a species of harmony to which the most refined ear might listen with pleasure.' Melville (p. 348) speaks of their dancing 'to the tune of a monotonous yet expressive song and chorus, in which old and young took part.' Their songs, as seen under heading Games and Amusements, were generally sung at corrobories."

1: Roth--149-150 (No date) 1890 Tasmanians
116, 533, 511

"Robinson says: 'They always retired to rest at dusk, rising again at midnight, and passing the remainder of the night in singing, ... in which they all join. This is kept up till daylight.' ... After he became acquainted with the hostile tribes, he says that the most popular of their songs were those in which they recounted their attacks on and their fights with the whites (Calder, Journ. p. 18). Both Leigh and Jeffreys (as quoted above) state the women sang a hymn or song to a good spirit to [150] secure the safety of absent husbands or friends; but Melville, in opposition to Robinson (when speaking of their singing), says (ch. xiv. p. 348): 'They never kept late hours, for no sooner was the sun down than they huddled round their fires, and went to sleep.' (1)"

"1. Some bars of music said to be Tasmanian have been published; but on hunting up the original reference, we find that they are Australian, and not Tasmanian."